United Nations ST/IC/2009/16

Secretariat

30 March 2009

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Arabic-language translators in 2009, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 and ST/AI/2000/1, as amended by ST/AI/2003/1.

2. A competitive examination for Arabic-language translators will be held, tentatively, on **19 October 2009** in New York, Geneva, Vienna and at a number of Arabic-speaking countries and other locations, according to the number and location of qualified applicants invited to take the examination. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic-language translators at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at other duty stations will be filled. When vacancies occur in the translation service, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as qualified external applicants. Staff members of subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or special mission are considered external applicants for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Arabic-language translators posts as they occur in the language section in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, Beirut and Addis Ababa. Successful candidates will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Assignments are subject to rotation (mobility) and Arabic translators may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Successful candidates are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 below.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2009.

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4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English and at least one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that applicants' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages should have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Applicants who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages by attaching to their application a photocopy of a diploma or a certificate from a language school or a brief explanation of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed. Staff members are advised to submit photocopies, not originals, of such documentation;

(c) Hold at least a three-year university degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status or hold a university degree from a recognized school of translation. Proof of degree and qualification must be attached to the application;

(d) As an exception, for staff members who hold a university degree in the fields of law, science or technology, the requirement of an additional official language may be waived by the Board of Examiners. In such cases, the examinee will be required to select the specialized text of a legal, scientific or technical nature in part (b) of the examination during the time provided for the translation of the additional language paper (see para. 8 (b) below). In addition to that specialized text, the examinee will be required to translate another specialized text from English in part (c) of the examination (see para. 8 (c) below);

(e) Be able to use computer workstations and have a command of word-processing skills.

5. The requirement for a university degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

6. In order to meet the Organization's needs to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who have reached the age of 56 by the deadline of submission of applications, 17 July 2009, will not be able to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the applicant is best able to work. Applicants' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

7. All applicants should submit with their application a one-page essay in Arabic, explaining the reasons for their interest in taking this examination. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. If a large number of applications is received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified applicants based on a review of qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4 above. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final**.

8. The written examination, to be held, tentatively, on 19 October 2009, will consist of three papers:

(a) Translation into Arabic of a general text in English (two hours). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only examinees who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into Arabic of a text chosen by the examinees from a total of four texts, one in each of the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) or, alternatively, for examinees with no knowledge of a third language, translation of a specialized legal, scientific or technical text from English for examinees with a relevant degree (one and a half hours);

(c) Translation into Arabic of one specialized text in English (economic, social, legal, scientific or technical) (one and a half hours).

9. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, examinees may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

10. On the basis of the results of the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected examinees to a competency-based interview. The Board will interview each examinee to assess whether he or she possesses the competencies required for the position. Candidates will be given some preparation time and be asked to translate orally a text from English into Arabic. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, examinees at these stages **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All examinees admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results. When vacancies occur, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are strongly encouraged to accept it, as declining may affect their prospects of receiving a subsequent offer.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be recruited as Arabic-language translators according to the staff rules in force.

13. In accordance with the needs of the service/section, translators may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

14. Successful candidates assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first **three months** in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, together with a copy of their P.11 or PHP, and the required essay, **not later than 17 July 2009**, to:

2009 Competitive Examination for Arabic-language translators
Examinations and Tests Section
Strategic Planning and Staffing Division
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, New York 10017
Fax No.: 1-212-963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early, preferably by e-mail or fax rather than through the mail. Applications that are incomplete (without the P.11 or PHP, or essay) or are received after the above deadline will **not** be considered.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to send their applications directly to the Examinations and Tests Section, through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations by **17 July 2009**, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section, Strategic Planning and Staffing Division, Office of Human Resources Management.

Application for staff members only

2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators

Index No.

Last name Category Level

First name Male Female

Date of entry on duty Month Year

Type of contract Expiration date

Department/office Duty station

Room No. Tel. extension Fax extension E-mail

Have you taken this examination before? Yes Year No

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes Year No

If yes, which examination(s)

What is your main language?[1]

Will you take the specialized technical paper? (Instead of the requirement for an additional official language) Yes No

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 form or, preferably, a PHP form and the required essay and attach them to this application. Describe your work experience giving dates and length of time and the organization for which you have worked as an Arabic-language translator.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2009/16 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators and am recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic-language translator will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 3, 12, 13 and 14.

Date _____ Signature _____
(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above.)